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# Exploring the Influence of Student Affairs Professionals on Learning Outcomes

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## Introduction

Research in higher education has demonstrated the degrees to which students are influenced by their peers, faculty, and a variety of other sources (Astin 1977, 1984, 1993, 1996; Pacarella & Terinzini 2005; Kuh & Hu, 2001). However, there is little research to indicate the influence of a growing sector of professionals that is focused on student development: student affairs (Love, 1995). The purpose of this study is to review the literature involving student engagement and the influence of student affairs professionals and to empirically evaluate the level of impact these professionals have at one private Christian university on the west coast.

The following questions guided this study: (1) What are the predictors of engagement with student affairs professionals among students? (2) To what extent does engagement with student affairs professionals affect a student's (a) cognitive complexity, (b) humanitarianism and civic engagement, and (c) intrapersonal development/spirituality? Our hypotheses are: (1) the more students are involved, the more they will be engaged with student affairs professionals, and (2) engagement with student affairs professionals will account for significant portions of the program-specific learning outcomes. This study examines the effectiveness of individual staff members in one student affairs department at a selective, private Christian institution and contributes to the understanding of how this important group of development professionals impacts the college experience.

According to Kuh (2003), smaller schools generally engage students more effectively than large institutions. Astin (1999) similarly demonstrated that “residential liberal arts colleges in general, and highly selective liberal arts colleges in particular, produce a pattern of consistently positive student outcomes not found in any other type of American higher-education institution” (p. 77). Moreover, “students attending private liberal arts colleges, compared to students attending other types of institutions, are more satisfied with the faculty, the quality of teaching, and the general education program, and are more likely to view the institution as student-oriented” (p. 83). A selective, private, Christian institution is the setting for this study; given the findings of Kuh, Astin, and others, this setting is likely to elicit a highly engaging learning environment.

One way to measure the impact of the college environment is to explore the degree to which students are involved. Student involvement, sometimes defined more broadly as the co-curricular experience, has been closely related to Astin’s (1977, 1984, 1993, 1996) concept of involvement, which includes peer interactions. According to Astin, “the student peer group is the single most potent source of influence on growth and development in the college years” (1993, p. 398). Astin (1992) also found that peer interactions were likely to be more influential than faculty interactions in the area of leadership development. Cognitive development and critical thinking are some of the positive outcomes associated with student involvement (Baxter Magolda, 1992). Given the spectrum of student involvement and Astin’s suggestion of the peer group as being the most influential factor in growth and development, it seems that student organizations may be a critical site for such growth.

Reisberg (2000) reported that the hundreds of student organizations on college campuses represent a significant part of the co-curricular experience for many students. However, according to Kuh et al. (2007),

it remains unclear to what extent student organizations, as entities, are nurtured by the larger institution. It is also unclear to what extent institutions seek to partner with student organizations to enhance student member connection to the institutions, or develop the potential of the organization as agents responsible for the betterment of the larger community in which they exist. (p. 10)

For small institutions that strive to foster a highly engaging atmosphere, student affairs professionals typically work closely with various student organizations and campus events. In order to understand the role of peer influence and involvement, the relationship between student affairs professionals and student organizations should be explored.

Research on college impact (e.g., Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) has demonstrated the increased professionalism and depth of education among student affairs practitioners. Astin (1993), Chickering and Reisser (1993), and Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) have extensively documented that some of the most powerful experiences at a university occur outside the classroom. Consequently, it may be beneficial to consider the influence of student affairs practitioners who are tasked with cultivating this aspect of the student college experience, which includes student organizations and overall campus involvement.

According to Love (1995), “student outcomes research is inadequate because the direct influence of student affairs professionals is not assessed and peer influences are not differentiated” (p. 162). College impact theories have been previously discussed and converge around understanding the ways and the degree to which the experience of attending college promotes change in students. Researchers have investigated a range of developmental areas including cognition, ethics, morality, and identity (e.g., Astin 1977, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). However, despite the significant amount of data, there seems to be a missing link in understanding the influence of student affairs. Love (1995) believed that “researchers have failed to consider the possible direct influence (in addition to the already recognized indirect influence) of student affairs and other nonfaculty professionals (e.g., academic affairs administrators, learning center staff) on students” (p. 162). Although Love’s provocative statement is now dated, little has been done to isolate the ways these staff members impact students. One reason for this deficiency may be the variety of duties carried out by student affairs departments.

For example, as previously mentioned, Astin (1993) demonstrated the ways students are impacted by different kinds of peer groups, college environments, and programs. However, student affairs professionals are not considered as a contributing factor of student impact. Some studies have evaluated clubs and organizations as forms of involvement with positive effects on learning without considering the influence of student affairs as a facilitator of involvement (e.g., Lundberg et al., 2007). Therefore, “universities may be overlooking opportunities to enhance students’ experiences and may be underestimating the impact of student affairs professionals on students’ experience” (Love, 1995, p. 162). This paper addresses the overlooked opportunity and specifically incorporates student affairs professionals in the conceptual framework of the student experience.

Models of student leadership indicate the importance of student affairs staff, regardless of specialty, to engage students in dialogue around topics of commitment, purpose, congruency, and citizenship. Komives et al. (2005) asserted that these professionals have the influence to play a very important role in students’ ability to expand their meaning-making capacity. Research in this area indicates that “student affairs staff at all levels of an institution would benefit from rethinking how they link leadership and service both programmatically and structurally” (Dugan, 2006, p. 341).

Given the accountability movement in higher education (Bresciani, 2009), there is an increasing demand for institutions to articulate learning outcomes for curricular and co-curricular programs and assess the degree to which programs achieve these outcomes. The Center for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) developed a series of learning and development outcomes designed to assist co-curricular facilitators in identifying learning outcomes and designing programs and policies to achieve those outcomes. The CAS standards represent criteria that higher education institutions and student support programs are expected and able to meet with the application of reasonable effort and diligence. However, each standard is certainly malleable to the institutional mission.

There are six CAS domains that include a total of 28 corresponding dimensions. For example, the interpersonal competence domain includes the corresponding dimensions: interdependence, collaboration, and effective leadership. Each dimension is an aspect of the domain that is used as a measurable outcome. This study evaluated three domains that the student affairs department at the research site considered most important. These three student outcome domains are as follows: cognitive complexity, civic engagement, and intrapersonal development. These domains represent the outcomes measured in this study to determine the impact of student affairs professionals.

The first domain, cognitive complexity, is comprised of four dimensions that were included in the development of a scale to measure the outcome:

1. Critical thinking: Identifies important problems, questions, and issues; analyzes, interprets, and makes judgments of the relevance and quality of information; assesses assumptions and considers alternative perspectives and solutions.
  2. Reflective thinking: Applies previously understood information, concepts, and experiences to a new situation or setting; rethinks previous assumptions.
  3. Effective reasoning: Uses complex information from a variety of sources including personal experience and observation to form a decision or opinion; is open to new ideas and perspectives.
  4. Creativity: Integrates mental, emotional, and creative processes for increased insight; formulates a new approach to a particular problem.
- (CAS, 2009, p. 26)

This outcome is particularly relevant to student leadership, organizational behavior, and problem solving abilities in multiple environments, and is an important learning outcome for many student affairs programs.

The second learning outcome domain considered in this study is humanitarianism and civic engagement, which is a sense of civic and social responsibility, as well as a global perspective. Four dimensions comprise the different facets of the outcome:

1. Understanding and appreciation of cultural and human differences: Understands one's own identity and culture; seeks involvement with people different from oneself; articulates the advantages and impact of a diverse society; identifies systematic barriers to equality and inclusiveness, then advocates and justifies means for dismantling them; in interactions with others, exhibits respect and preserves the dignity of others.
2. Social responsibility: Recognizes social systems and their influence on people; appropriately challenges the unfair, unjust, or uncivil behavior of other individuals or groups; participates in service/volunteer activities that are characterized by reciprocity; articulates the values and principles involved in personal decision-making; affirms and values the worth of individuals and communities.
3. Global perspective: Understands and analyzes the interconnectedness of societies worldwide; demonstrates effective stewardship of human, economic, and environmental resources.
4. Sense of civic responsibility: Demonstrates consideration of the welfare of others in decision-making; engages in critical reflection and principled dissent; understands and participates in relevant governance systems; educates and facilitates the civic engagement of others. (CAS, 2009, p. 27)

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Programs working with volunteerism, service learning, and intercultural relations are all focused on this outcome.

The third outcome domain in this study is intrapersonal development, which includes four dimensions. Two of the four dimensions were used in this study, in order to focus on the components that matched the institutional mission. The outcome dimensions are:

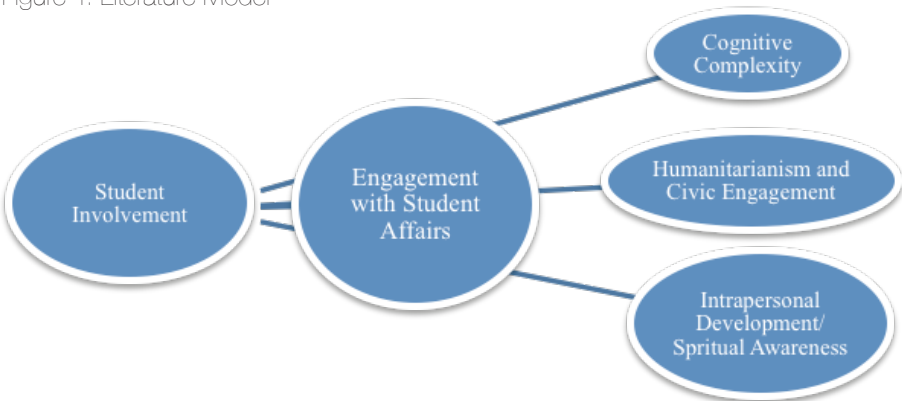
1. Spiritual awareness: Develops and articulates personal belief system; understands roles of spirituality in personal and group values and behaviors; critiques, compares, and contrasts various belief systems; explores issues of purpose, meaning, and faith.
2. Commitment to ethics and integrity: Incorporates ethical reasoning into action; explores and articulates the values and principles involved in personal decision-making; acts in congruence with personal values and beliefs; exemplifies dependability, honesty, and trustworthiness; accepts personal accountability. (CAS, 2009, p. 26)

As a faith-based university, these aspects of the domain were the most relevant for the outcomes identified by the student affairs department.

These types of learning outcome domains (e.g., cognitive complexity, civic engagement, and intrapersonal development) are useful in the field of research for student affairs, as they outline measurable objectives that should be connected to student involvement

and engagement with student affairs. Measurement of these outcomes and the degree to which student affairs professionals may be able to engage with students and impact their development is a concrete way to frame the larger question about the influence of student affairs. Figure 1 demonstrates our hypothesized connection between the degree of student involvement, the level of contact and engagement students have with student affairs professionals, and the three learning outcomes.

Figure 1: Literature Model



Methodology

Data Source

The entire undergraduate population of the small, selective, Christian liberal arts college located on the west coast was emailed an invitation to complete the instrument in exchange for credit on a course assignment in a university-wide convocation program. This process yielded a sample size of 1,208 undergraduate students. Of the sample, 38% were men and 62% were women. About 32% were first-year students, 22% were sophomores, 26% were juniors, and 17% were seniors. About 62% were Caucasian, 14% were Asian/Asian American, 8% were Latino/a, 5% were multiracial, 4% were African American, and 2% were Alaskan Native/Native American/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Although the sample comprised nearly 44% of the student body, women and Caucasian students completed the survey at a higher rate than other student populations.

Love (1995) warned that surveys asking students about their level of contact with student affairs professionals, staff, or administrators tend to create confusion. Recognizing that students interpret these terms in different ways, this survey provided specific examples of student affairs professionals, including staff from residential life, the career center, counseling center, volunteer center, student activities, etc. In addition, the survey asked a variety of additional questions, including whether or not students have attended the health center and/or counseling center, and the degree to which students are involved

in many co-curricular activities. The Student Involvement and Learning Outcomes instrument, a survey designed by the university where the study was conducted, contains a variety of student demographic and involvement variables. The instrument was designed to assess various institutional student learning and engagement outcomes, including: faith and spirituality, vocation and purpose, identity development, cognitive development, and student affairs engagement. For the purpose of this study, the domains used were those that measured campus involvement, interactions with student affairs professionals, and different components of student learning. Student learning was measured through three constructs designed to match the aforementioned CAS standards: cognitive complexity, humanitarianism and civic engagement, and intrapersonal development and spiritual awareness.

### Data Analysis

The following questions guided this study: (1) What are the predictors of students who are engaged with student affairs professionals? (2) To what extent does engagement with student affairs professionals affect a student's (a) intrapersonal development and spirituality, (b) humanitarianism and student engagement, and (c) cognitive complexity? To assess the characteristics of students who are engaged with student affairs professionals, a multiple linear regression was conducted. The independent variables included eight dichotomous variables that assessed students' involvement with various campus organizations and services provided by or coordinated through the student affairs office. The variables included gender, class year, intramural sports, student government, intercultural/ethnic groups, fraternity/sorority membership, student ministries, and involvement with career, counseling, and volunteer centers. The independent variable was a single construct of nine items that measured the level of engagement students experienced with student affairs professionals, who were identified as working in residential life, the career center, counseling center, volunteer center, or student activities (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .95$ ). Missing data was deleted listwise, and tolerance was set at .6 to limit multicollinearity.

To assess the relationship between engagement with student affairs professionals and various student-learning outcomes, three separate regression analyses were conducted. The construct of nine items that measured the level of engagement students experienced with student affairs professionals was utilized as the independent variable, and the three student outcome factors were utilized as dependent variables. The student outcome variables were: cognitive complexity, measured with a 10-item construct (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .81$ ), humanitarianism and civic engagement, measured with a 15-item construct (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .83$ ); and intrapersonal development and spiritual awareness, measured with a 14-item construct (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .94$ ). See Table 1 for a full description of the independent and dependent variables.



## Results

Upon first review of comparison groups in the dataset, it was clear students were much less engaged with student affairs professionals than with faculty. This finding was not surprising, given that the university has over 200 full time faculty and only 56 student affairs professionals, only of which about half maintain a high level of involvement with students. Although 40% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they engaged with faculty in discussions about life-purpose and personal struggles (based on 12 questions related to faculty engagement), only 20-25% agreed or strongly agreed that they have engaged with student affairs staff members on this level (based on 12 questions related to student affairs staff engagement). One of the core objectives to this study was to expand our understanding of this group of students and the impact of engagement.

The regression analysis allowed the various elements of the survey to provide a more nuanced picture of the predictors of engagement with student affairs and, consequently, the outcomes connected to engagement with student affairs professionals. Multiple regression was conducted to determine the best linear combination of student involvement and demographic variables (i.e., gender, class year, intramural sports, student government, intercultural/ethnic groups, fraternity/sorority membership, student ministries, and involvement with the career center, the counseling center, and the volunteer center) for predicting engagement with student affairs professionals. Assumptions of linearity, normally distributed errors, and uncorrelated errors were checked and met. The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations can be found in Table 2. This combination of variables significantly predicted engagement with student affairs professionals,  $F(10, 1169) = 7.60, p < .001$ , with involvement with the career center, counseling center, a fraternity or sorority, campus ministry, and class year significantly contributing to the prediction. Albeit significant, only 5% of the variance in engagement with student affairs professionals can be explained by the student demographic and involvement variables. According to Cohen (1988), this effect size is smaller than typical. The beta weights, presented in Table 3, suggest that involvement with the counseling center and campus ministry contributed most to engagement with student affairs professionals, and that younger students were more likely to be engaged.

Three separate regressions were conducted to assess the relationship between engagement with student affairs professionals and three outcome variables: (1) intrapersonal development and spirituality, (2) humanitarianism and civic engagement, and (3) cognitive complexity. Means, standard deviations, beta weights, and effect sizes can be found in Table 4. Engagement with student affairs professionals significantly predicted a student's intrapersonal development/spiritual awareness scores,  $F(1, 1206) = 43.37, p < .001$ , and humanitarianism and civic engagement scores,  $F(1, 1206) = 67.38, p < .001$ . According to Cohen (1988), the effect sizes are smaller than typical. Student affairs engagement was not significantly related student's cognitive complexity scores,  $F(1, 1206) = 1.83, p = .177$ .

The limitations of this study include small effect sizes for all significant results, a dataset that is not representative of the site of the study (in terms of gender and racial/ethnic composition), and lack of ability to assess students' level of involvement (e.g., leader or member) within each organization.

## Discussion

Given the statistical significance of these models and the connections between student involvement, engagement with student affairs, and their ability to predict learning outcomes, an important objective of this study is to make the information available for departments of student affairs that are trying to assess and increase their impact on the student learning outcomes. First, the design of the study progresses toward responding to the gap in the literature by looking beyond student involvement, to understand how involvement is linked to engagement with individuals working in student affairs. The study further progresses since it does not relegate engagement with student affairs professionals as the end goal, but rather identifies learning outcomes that should develop from both involvement and engagement. In using the practical results of this study to inform policies, programs, and resources, the institution would benefit from (1) defining certain learning outcome goals for specific programs, (2) measuring the contribution of student affairs professionals to the overall outcome, and (3) developing a deeper understanding of elements that contribute to these outcomes.

## Student Involvement

The first hypothesis was that greater degrees of student involvement would equate to greater degrees of engagement with student affairs. This hypothesis was based on the fact that student affairs professionals facilitate significant opportunities for co-curricular involvement. It seemed logical that students who were highly involved would have greater exposure to student affairs professionals, thereby exhibiting higher levels of engagement. Overall, our analysis indicated only four of eight involvement variables related to co-curricular activity are significant predictors of student affairs engagement. Involvement with the counseling center and campus ministry programs were the highest individual predictors, followed by the career center and involvement with a fraternity or sorority. As a cohesive measure, involvement was a significant predictor of engagement.

Although the results lend to rejecting the null-hypothesis, the analysis did not reveal the explanatory power expected. One potential reason for this finding is that exposure to student affairs professionals due to involvement does not equate to engagement. For example, student government and ethnic club involvement significantly contributed to the model. These students may have exposure to staff members, but are not necessarily mentored, guided, or influenced by student affairs staff. Conversely, the counseling center, the most significant predictor of engagement, focuses on individual relationships. Further, within campus ministries, staff may be more inclined toward relationship-building and

influence, as opposed to facilitating structure. This area might be a significant one for a student affairs department to evaluate goals for subunits. For instance, the student affairs professionals at this university might evaluate how to be strategic in their influence and impact. Given that the overall student affairs staff to student ratio is 1:53 in comparison to 1:16 for faculty, identifying indicators and goals for engagement and the impact of such engagement might prove to be valuable. Through comparison, this analysis does not suggest faculty and staff numbers should be equitable, but illustrates the need for a strategic plan to influence a student body with fewer numbers. Within the 75-80% of the student body who were neutral or disagreed that they were influenced by student affairs, there could be groups of overlooked students. Although our analysis did not target a niche of students that were not engaged, specific programs might not be as effective in reaching students.

### Learning Outcomes


Our next hypothesis was that engagement with student affairs would lead to higher scores on the learning outcome variables: 1) Intrapersonal Development/Spiritual Awareness, 2) Humanitarianism and Civic Engagement, and 3) Cognitive Reasoning. This particular student affairs unit adheres to the CAS standards and has identified these three domains as part of the core learning outcomes for their programs. As a church-related university, Intrapersonal Development/Spiritual Awareness is an important learning outcome. Faith and learning are integrated in all areas of the curricular and co-curricular environment. Although the student ministries involvement variable is most obviously linked to this outcome, mentorship and programming in most departments connect in some way as well. The results of the analysis indicated that engagement with student affairs professionals had a significant, positive impact on this outcome. Albeit small, the role of student affairs engagement is noteworthy, ultimately indicating that when a staff member is able to provide guidance, mentorship, and influence for students, growth in spiritual awareness is likely.

Humanitarianism and Civic Engagement is another learning outcome that is more directly linked to programming in the volunteer center and intercultural affairs. The results of this analysis are in tension. Involvement with the volunteer center or intercultural affairs was not a significant predictor of student affairs engagement. In essence, it could be hypothesized that these programs impact students through facilitated activities, as opposed to individual staff members having high levels of influence on the identified learning outcomes. However, engagement with student affairs significantly predicts Humanitarianism and Civic Engagement. Perhaps the students that were both involved in the activities and engaged with the staff members contributed to the significant results for this outcome. If this outcome is a high priority for a student affairs unit, then the practical questions that should emerge are how involvement and engagement can be coupled to produce higher outcome levels, and how engagement can increase with limited resources.

On the third learning outcome, Cognitive Reasoning, engagement with student affairs professionals was not a significant predictor. This composite variable is more connected to classroom activities than the other two learning outcomes, but is still an important objective for co-curricular activities. The objective blends the curricular and co-curricular environment by connecting personal experiences and challenges to classroom experiences. The outcome involves making decisions through council, building upon strengths, and considering other points of view. Our analysis could be used to emphasize that the student affairs unit is not meeting their goal for influencing students on this outcome. The question, however, may be more directed to the entire learning environment (curricular and co-curricular), as opposed to only considering student affairs. Given that the learning outcome involves a blend of these environments, it may be valuable to review the degree to which these two components of the learning environment collaborate to achieve the desired outcome. The lack of collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals may serve as a barrier to achieving the highest potential outcome on Cognitive Reasoning.

#### Conclusion and Future Research

In light of what is known about the historical influence of student involvement, there is practical utility in the information provided in our analysis. This study represents a small, exploratory step toward understanding the impact for the limited number of students who are engaged with student affairs professionals at this university. The most significant implications of this study are for student affairs professionals who might utilize this type of data to make strategic decisions and further extend mission-centered impact across the student body.

Future research needs to thoroughly investigate whether or not there are certain groups of students or types of experiences that are negative predictors for student affairs engagement. If there are, these traits and experiences preclude those students from having the best opportunity to advance along these learning outcome continuums. Although it is not always simple to identify ineffective environments, it is essential to address these environments to maximize deep learning. Future research should also extend these measurements into a longitudinal dataset to assess how students change over time. This type of research will enable more explanatory analysis and provide a clearer picture of these learning and development outcomes. This study demonstrates that student affairs professionals make significant contributions to the core functions and objectives of the university. Beyond the role of student affairs, administrators should further evaluate the ways in which the co-curricular environment facilitated by staff members can complement and enhance these learning outcomes for students. 

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Table 1  
Description of Variables

|                                                      | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Student Demographic and Involvement Variables</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Class level                                          | Coded 1 = <i>first-year</i> , 2 = <i>sophomore</i> , 3 = <i>junior</i> , 4 = <i>senior</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Gender                                               | 1 = <i>men</i> , 2 = <i>women</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Career Center                                        | 1 = <i>no</i> , 2 = <i>yes</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Counseling Center                                    | 1 = <i>no</i> , 2 = <i>yes</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Fraternity/Sorority                                  | 1 = <i>no</i> , 2 = <i>yes</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Intramurals                                          | 1 = <i>no</i> , 2 = <i>yes</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Intercultural/Ethnic Club                            | 1 = <i>no</i> , 2 = <i>yes</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Student Government                                   | 1 = <i>no</i> , 2 = <i>yes</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Volunteer Center                                     | 1 = <i>no</i> , 2 = <i>yes</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Student Ministry                                     | 1 = <i>no</i> , 2 = <i>yes</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Scale Variables</i>                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Engagement with Student Affairs                      | Composite variable using the mean of 9 items: I have had many conversations with Student Affairs Staff (Residential Life, Career Center, Counseling Center, Student Activities, etc.) regarding: my specific life-purpose, my development as a leader, and my desire to live a life of service. I have felt comfortable disclosing my personal struggles with Student Affairs Staff related to: my life purpose, leadership challenges, and personal thoughts about living a life of service. Student Affairs Staff have guided me in my search for: personal meaning and purpose in my life, my desire to grow as a leader, and ways to live a life of service. Each individual item was coded on a 5 point scale, with 1 = <i>strongly disagree</i> , 2 = <i>disagree</i> , 3 = <i>neither agree nor disagree</i> , 4 = <i>agree</i> , 5 = <i>strongly agree</i> . (Cronbach's alpha = .95).                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Intrapersonal Development/Spiritual Awareness        | Composite variable using the mean of 14 items: My faith shapes how I think and act each and every day, My religious faith is extremely important to me, I look to my faith as a source of inspiration, I look to my faith as providing meaning and purpose in my life, I consider myself active in my faith or church, My faith is an important part of who I am as a person, I spend a lot of time contemplating God's will for my life. I have a good sense about God's purpose for my life. I am confident that I know how I should be using the gifts and talents that God has given me, Most of the time I feel close to God, I depend on my faith in God for decision-making and direction, I look to God for strength, support, and guidance, and I view myself as a spiritual person. Each individual item was coded on a 4 point scale, with 1 = <i>strongly disagree</i> , 2 = <i>disagree</i> , 3 = <i>agree</i> , 4 = <i>strongly agree</i> . (Cronbach's alpha = .94).                                                                                                    |
| Humanitarianism and Civic Engagement                 | Composite variable using the mean of 15 items: I have identified my mission in life, I make a difference in the lives of those around me, I am taking actions now that are moving toward my mission in life, I am making a contribution to society, I care a great deal about reducing poverty in the United States and throughout the world, I give significant portions of time and money to help other people, I speak out for equality for women and minorities, I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world, I am concerned that our country is not doing enough to help the poor, and I am active in efforts to promote social justice. Each individual item was coded with a 7-point scale, 1 = <i>never true</i> , 7 = <i>always true</i> . To what extent students are involved in service at present, with the volunteer center, with a club, and in class, and overall community service involvement. Each individual item was coded with a 5-point scale: 1 = <i>very little</i> , 5 = <i>very much</i> . (Cronbach's alpha = .83). |
| Cognitive Complexity                                 | Composite variable using the mean of 10 items: When I do not understand a concept in an assigned reading, I look it up on the internet or in another book, If faced with a difficult situation, I seek counsel from others before I make a decision, I apply personal experiences to my work in the classroom, I have a sense of relaxation and accomplishment when a task is complete, I can recall projects where I have added another dimension beyond the expected norm, I perform tasks with precision, I enjoy hearing others perspectives even when they are different from my own, I use past experiences to make decisions in the present and for the future, I recognize moral dilemmas in difficult situations, I am open to hearing others point out my weaknesses and strengths. Each individual item was coded with a 5-point scale: 1 = <i>never true</i> , 5 = <i>always true</i> . (Cronbach's alpha = .81).                                                                                                                                                          |

Table 2  
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for Engagement with Student Affairs Professionals and Student Involvement Variables  
(N = 1180)

| Variable                              | M    | SD   | 1    | 2     | 3      | 4      | 5       | 6       | 7     | 8      | 9      | 10     |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|------|-------|--------|--------|---------|---------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| Engagement with Student Affairs Scale | 5.16 | 2.13 | .05* | .09** | .16*** | .07*   | .04     | .03     | .04   | .12*** | -.02   | -.04   |
| Predictor Variables                   |      |      |      |       |        |        |         |         |       |        |        |        |
| 1. Gender                             | 1.61 | .49  | -    | .03   | .04    | .13*** | -.24*** | .06*    | -.05* | .04    | .07*   | .02    |
| 2. Career Center                      | 1.40 | .49  |      | -     | .12*** | -.12   | .06*    | .12***  | .08** | .02    | .13*** | .11*** |
| 3. Counseling Center                  | 1.22 | .42  |      |       | -      | -.03   | -.01    | .06*    | .01   | .03    | -.02   | .09**  |
| 4. Fraternity/Sorority                | 1.29 | .45  |      |       |        | -      | .02     | -.12*** | -.01  | .01    | .01    | .02    |
| 5. Intramurals                        | 1.16 | .37  |      |       |        |        | -       | .02     | .05*  | .01    | .05*   | .03    |
| 6. Intercultural/Ethnic Clubs         | 1.13 | .34  |      |       |        |        |         | -       | .07*  | -.04   | .09**  | .08**  |
| 7. Student Government                 | 1.01 | .11  |      |       |        |        |         |         | -     | .06*   | .01    | .08**  |
| 8. Student Ministry                   | 1.11 | .31  |      |       |        |        |         |         |       | -      | .04    | .02    |
| 9. Volunteer Center                   | 1.12 | .33  |      |       |        |        |         |         |       |        | -      | -.01   |
| 10. Class year                        | 2.31 | 1.12 |      |       |        |        |         |         |       |        |        | -      |

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

Table 3  
Multiple Regression Analysis Summary for Predicting Student Affairs Engagement (N = 1180)

| Variable                   | B    | SEB | β      |
|----------------------------|------|-----|--------|
| Gender                     | .19  | .13 | .04    |
| Career Center              | .34  | .13 | .08**  |
| Counseling Center          | .79  | .15 | .15*** |
| Fraternity/Sorority        | .36  | .14 | .08**  |
| Intramurals                | .25  | .17 | .04    |
| Intercultural/Ethnic Clubs | .20  | .18 | .03    |
| Student Government         | .54  | .54 | .03    |
| Student Ministry           | .80  | .19 | .12*** |
| Volunteer Center           | -.23 | .19 | -.04   |
| Class year                 | -.14 | .06 | -.07** |

Note. Adjusted  $R^2 = .05$ ;  $F(10, 1169) = 7.60$ ,  $p < .001$

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

Table 4  
Multiple Regression Analyses Summary for Student Affairs Engagement Predicting Student Learning Outcomes (N = 1208)

| Learning Outcome Variables                                | M     | SD   | B   | SEB | β      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------|------|-----|-----|--------|
| Intrapersonal Development/Spiritual Awareness             | 6.58  | 1.77 | .16 | .02 | .19*** |
| Adjusted $R^2 = .034$ ; $F(1, 1206) = 43.37$ , $p < .001$ |       |      |     |     |        |
| Humanitarianism and Civic Engagement                      | 10.32 | 2.0  | .22 | .03 | .23*** |
| Adjusted $R^2 = .052$ ; $F(1, 1206) = 67.38$ , $p < .001$ |       |      |     |     |        |
| Cognitive Complexity                                      | 3.55  | .80  | .02 | .01 | .04    |
| Adjusted $R^2 = .001$ ; $F(1, 1206) = 1.83$ , $p = .177$  |       |      |     |     |        |

\*\*\* p < .001

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